



National Day Nurseries Association

Maths Champions Case Study

Advantage Day Nursery

Melody Cox - EYP

Introduction

The Maths Champion project has been a really positive project for all involved. Personally I have lived and breathed maths in my spare time, always looking for websites to inspire the staff team to see that we are incorporating maths all the time and how easily ideas can be put together with a little imagination and role modelling lots of lovely maths language. This has really benefitted the setting.

Highlights of the project

I am really pleased that through our team meetings and the willingness of staff to talk about their own maths experiences after being involved in this project the staff overall are no longer so scared of maths or providing appropriate activities for children. This has been a massive highlight for us.

Another highlight was a comment made by a team member who said that *“I enjoyed talking to others and discussing different areas of maths and what I feel confident in and what I feel I need support in. It made me feel better about maths just by talking about my past experiences”*

Impact of the project

The team

The largest area of impact of the project has been raising the confidence levels of staff and helping provide an 'excitement' about maths in a supportive and non-threatening way across the whole setting.

We are registered for 169 children so I have really enjoyed the specific focus in this area within our large setting with key members of staff (all of whom are room supervisors of our 2-3's room and preschool rooms).

The impact of this project and the focus on maths is already starting to filter down to staff in their rooms and therefore to the children via the activities/language opportunities that are provided by these staff.

We have utilised the NDNA resources and we have also developed a Pinterest Early Years Maths board. The NDNA resources have helped staff see the differentiation and language skills you could use in activities and supported them to implement new ideas and concepts with their children. Pinterest has (with all the staff in my group being visual learners) inspired activities through simple photos, alongside me talking about how they could use the activities across different age/stage groups of children, sometimes veering away from the obvious. All staff have chosen something they would like to make or do e.g. using the children's interest of trains by ordering trains with numbers, looking at different size track, which piece will fit in this space? A small or big one? The activities have been so successful because the staff are really focusing on children's interests and asking themselves how they can develop maths opportunities within these specific interests and going to the children, rather than setting up activities on the 'maths table' and asking the children to come to them.

The environment

For us the Maths Champion project has given all of us the opportunity to build up mathematical experiences in our outside play. We have revisited our outdoor planning and set up a three week planning cycle which includes lots more mathematical opportunities.

The staff are using equipment in a more varied way e.g. our wooden seesaw is now seen as not just a physical development opportunity but also a way to teach children about weight, estimating, comparison and problem solving. We use questions such as, “Who's heavier? Who's lighter? How can we make this side heavier? When the see saw go up does that mean you are heavier or lighter than your friend?”

Staff are using language more in everyday activities. The most exciting plan for me is developing a Mud Kitchen. We plan to really support the full use of opportunities for the staff in relation to this and think will give the children a fantastic opportunity for developing their mud maths skills! (How much mud can you pick up in one hand? Can you put more mud on the other hand?)

The children and their development

At this stage in the project the children have a wider range of activities, an inspired staff team who are developing more confidence in their use of maths language across more areas of the classroom and an enhanced awareness of how the children themselves are using maths in their own play.

Some of the children were catching rain water in their hands so we planned an activity to use measuring jugs to catch more rain. We talked about who had 'more' and 'less'; we used jugs with numbers on the side to stretch the children's learning of bigger numbers; we talked about how many jugs of our collected water it would take to fill up one whole jug. The children were excited about this activity, a little competitive, and we had a lot of fun outside in the rain!

Future plans after the project

We plan on continuing our focus on maths and bringing in more of the team as the involvement continues. The use of the NDNA resources and Pinterest will continue to help us remain focused and develop our practice in maths further, which will continue to benefit the children and the team members supporting them.

The team members have a real buzz about maths now and we want to continue this for as long as we can.